

## The Man In The Portrait

She stood in the hallway, her candle flickering softly from a draft.  
There were often drafts in this old house  
But wasn't that how it always was? Who hadn't heard of an old, drafty house?  
This one was... definitely.  
Even with the globe over her candle holder, the air still managed to make the  
bright orange flame, dance.

As had become her customary, nightly routine, she walked down the  
hallway...to *him*.

He'd come with the house. It was abandoned, decaying...but she'd wanted it.  
Typical story...she got it for back taxes at a real estate auction because no one  
else wanted it.

It wasn't until she'd really started exploring the sprawling and dilapidated  
manor did she realize *why* it had been abandoned and *why* it had been allowed  
to fall to ruin.

She had no idea how she was going to restore the decrepit relic. Maybe she  
wouldn't...

But, no matter what she decided, she'd make it at least... liveable.

The roof had leaks and holes and some parts had collapsed.

Vines, some with beautiful blossoms had started growing into the house,  
lending a cheerful air to the depressing soul of the empty abode.

Ideas were cooking in her head...they had been since she first laid eyes on the  
terrifying behemoth.  
She'd find a way to manage.

She stopped, without even thinking...right in front of...**him**.

No matter what, she'd keep *him* safe.

The hallway was intact. It didn't smell great from the decades of soaking rain that had managed to seep behind the walls, but at least the ancient wood was still holding strong.

She gazed into his black eyes...both pained and defiant, his greying black hair, loose around his broad shoulders.

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He mesmerized her. She would gladly share this malignant and musty mansion with him...gladly...she would.